

POWER HOUR

5/12/2024

Lesson Text:
Romans 4:13-25

Background Scripture:
Romans 4

Devotional Reading:
Genesis 15:1-6

“COUNTED AS RIGHTEOUS”

NLT TRANSLATION

Learning Facts: To summarize Paul's view of Abraham.

Biblical Principle: [To explain faith's role in being counted as righteous.](#)

Daily Application: To brainstorm with loving actions, ways to celebrate God's blessing of grace through faith.

Romans 4:13-25 NLT

13 Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. **14** If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. **15** For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!) **16** So the promise is received by faith. It is given as a free gift. And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. **17** That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." This happened because Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life and who creates new things out of nothing. **18** Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, "That's how many descendants you will have!" **19** And Abraham's faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah's womb. **20** Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. **21** He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. **22** And because of Abraham's faith, God counted him as righteous. **23** And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn't just for Abraham's benefit. It was recorded **24** for our benefit, too, assuring us that God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who

raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

LESSON CONTEXT

Romans 4 is part of Paul's overall argument supporting his statement in Romans 1:16–17: I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Romans Chapters 1–3 explores God's primary challenge in keeping the ancient promises, namely, the profound sinfulness of all human beings (Romans 3:23). Chapter 4 begins the discussion of the remedy to universal sin. Far from facing a hopeless situation, humans have a model available to them of how to approach God. That model is the life of Abraham. When God promised that he would bless the world through Abraham, Abraham chose to respond in faith (Genesis 15:6; quoted in Romans 4:3, 9, 22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Paul's readers, especially those of Jewish heritage, would have agreed that Abraham's legacy was important and valuable. The question in dispute is precisely what that legacy is. Paul argues that Abraham had a relationship with God because he placed his faith in God and trusted God's promises. Nothing else. In the New Testament, faith equals trust in God as the one who has promised to bless humanity. Jesus modeled that trust by submitting to his sacrificial death on the cross, being confident that God would work for good through Jesus' shame and suffering. That trust is the basis for any relationship with the same merciful God.

CONCLUSION

We Are Not Alone

God counts us as righteous when we, like Abraham, trust the promises of redemption and live accordingly. We are not righteous because of the good we do or the evil we avoid, but because God acknowledges us as loyal to Him, staking all our hopes on His promises. And His offer of salvation extends to all because sin has wrecked us all. We stand together in both our need and our hope.

This unity of humanity may show itself in different ways. We might wallow together in our sin, growing increasingly hostile to each other and sacrificing our common humanity on the altar of greed, envy, pride, and hatred. Or we might acknowledge our need, trust in God's mercy, and so join in a community built on such a faith. The choice belongs to us. How do we build a community on such a basis? A church full of people who trust in God's promises live generous, open-hearted, kind lives. They, like Abraham, show

hospitality to strangers as though they were angels (Hebrews 13:2). Such a church values the whole trajectory of a person's life of faith, emphasizing neither failures nor heroic successes but faithfulness in the face of adversity (James 1:2–3) and God's seeming slowness to act (2 Peter 3:9). This community of believers knows itself to be saved, not because of its own merits but because of God's mercy.

QUESTION(S)

- What difference does it make that you cannot and do not need to try to earn righteousness?

PRAYER

God of Abraham and all who trust You, focus our minds not on our limitations but on Your great love for Your creation. Thank You for Jesus' sacrifice, which we accept in faith as reconciling us to You. In His name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Justification by faith is not an abstract idea but a reality for life.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "Reconciled to God" where we can commit to sharing with an unbeliever a personal story of what life was like before and after being reconciled to God. Study Romans 5:1-11.